

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A control method for controlling an image pickup apparatus in an image delivery system that delivers an image acquired from the image pickup apparatus to at least one of multiple external devices, the image pickup apparatus being remotely controllable by the multiple external devices, the method comprising:
- controlling the image pickup apparatus at a preset time based on preset control data; and
- inhibiting remote control of the image pickup apparatus by a predetermined external device during the control performed based on the control data.

2. The control method according to claim 1, wherein each of the multiple external devices and the control data is given a priority level of authorization to control the image pickup apparatus, and upon the inhibiting of remote control, remote control of the image pickup apparatus by an external device with a priority level lower than that of the control data is inhibited.

3. The control method according to claim 2, further comprising:
- determining whether or not there is an external device controlling the image pickup apparatus at the preset time; and

comparing a priority level of the external device and that of the control data and forcibly stopping authorization given to the external device to control the image pickup apparatus when the priority level of
5 the control data is higher.

4. The control method according to claim 2 further comprising forcibly stopping control performed based on the control data when remote control of the image
10 pickup apparatus is requested by an external device with a priority level higher than that of the control data during the control performed based on the control data.

15 5. The control method according to claim 1, wherein the control data includes authorization information of an external device to which control of the image pickup apparatus is permitted during the control performed based on the control data, and in the inhibition of
20 remote control, remote control of the image pickup apparatus by an external device other than the external device to which control is permitted is inhibited based on the authorization information.

25 6. The control method according to claim 1 further comprising:

detecting presence of an abnormality based on an image acquired from the image pickup apparatus during the control performed based on the control data; and

5 saving the image acquired from the image pickup apparatus when any abnormality is detected.

7. The control method according to claim 6, wherein an abnormality is detected based on difference between frames of the image.

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8. The control method according to claim 1, wherein the control data includes at least one of a zoom value, a pan control value and a tilt control value of the image pickup apparatus.

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9. The control method according to claim 1, wherein an tracking operation is performed for an object moving in in image acquired from the image pickup apparatus during the control performed based on the control data.

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10. An image delivery apparatus that delivers images acquired from an image pickup apparatus to at least one of multiple external devices, the image pickup apparatus being remotely controllable by the multiple
25 external devices, the image delivery apparatus comprising:

a data storage medium that stores control data to control the image pickup apparatus and a start time to start control using the control data;

5 a schedule execution unit that starts control of the image pickup apparatus based on the control data at the start time; and

a restriction unit that inhibits remote control of the image pickup apparatus by a predetermined external device during control by said schedule execution unit.

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11. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 10, wherein each of the multiple external devices and the control data is given a priority level of authorization to control the image pickup apparatus, and said
15 restriction unit inhibits remote control of the image pickup apparatus by external devices with a priority level lower than that of the control data.

12. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 11
20 further comprising:

a unit that determines whether or not there is an external device controlling the image pickup apparatus at the start time; and

a unit that compares a priority level of the
25 external device and that of the control data and forcibly stops authorization given to the external

device to control the image pickup apparatus when the priority level of the control data is higher.

13. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 11
5 further comprising a unit that forcibly stops control
by said schedule execution unit when remote control of
the image pickup apparatus is requested by an external
device with a priority level higher than that of the
control data during control by said schedule execution
10 unit.

14. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 10,
wherein the control data includes authorization
information of an external device to which control of
15 the image pickup apparatus is permitted during control
by said schedule execution unit, and said restriction
unit inhibits remote control of the image pickup
apparatus by an external device other than the external
device to which control is permitted based on the
20 authorization information.

15. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 10,
further comprising:

a detection unit that detects presence of an
25 abnormality based on an image acquired from the image
pickup apparatus during control by said schedule
execution unit; and

a saving unit that saves the image acquired from the image pickup apparatus when any abnormality is detected by said detection unit.

5 16. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said detection means detects an abnormality based on difference between frames of the image.

10 17. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the control data includes at least one of a zoom value, a pan control value and a tilt control value of the image pickup apparatus.

15 18. The image delivery apparatus according to claim 10, wherein an tracking operation is performed for an object moving in an image acquired from the image pickup apparatus during control by said schedule execution unit.

20 19. A storage medium readable by a data processing apparatus, the storage medium storing a program which is executable by the data processing apparatus and comprises program codes realizing a control method described in claim 1.

25 20. A storage medium readable by a data processing apparatus, the storage medium storing a program which

is executable by the data processing apparatus and comprises program codes which causes the data processing apparatus to function as an image delivery apparatus described in claim 10.

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